

How to Book Entertainment

When booking your entertainment, think about your guests, the nature of your event, and your budget. You can book entertainment options like musicians, dancers, speakers, and comedians. Research the types of performances and entertainers...

Part 1 of 3:

Choosing Your Entertainment

1.



Research your total event costs and set an entertainment budget. You may already have a budget in mind, though try to break down how much you can allot for entertainment. Remember to include other costs, like food, decorations, and gifts, and see what you have left over in your budget.^[1]

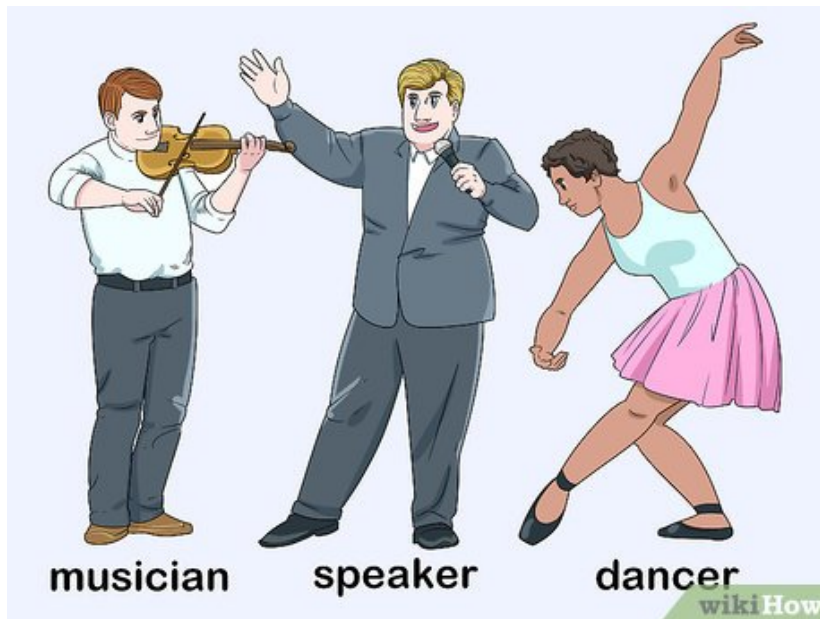
2.



Book in advance to secure your top choices. Consider your entertainment options well before your event, and plan to book your entertainer early. Entertainers are often very busy and can book up months in advance.

1. You don't have to rush into a decision, but look into performer's calendars to get an idea of their availability. You can look at their upcoming events on their website.

3.



Choose your performance type. You can choose a variety of performance options, such as musician, dancer, or speaker. Make your decision based upon your guests and event style. Consider your guests age, background, and culture. Think about your entertainment needs for the event, and choose a performance type that will fit well with your event.^[2]

1. Do you want a musician, like a band, acoustic singer, or DJ? Or, are you looking for a dance performance or comedy skit?
2. Is the party for a child's birthday party or graduation? Or is this a baby shower?

3. You can get creative and book less common entertainment, like fire performers, hula hoopers, or ventriloquists.

EXPERT TIP

Picture 4 of How to Book Entertainment

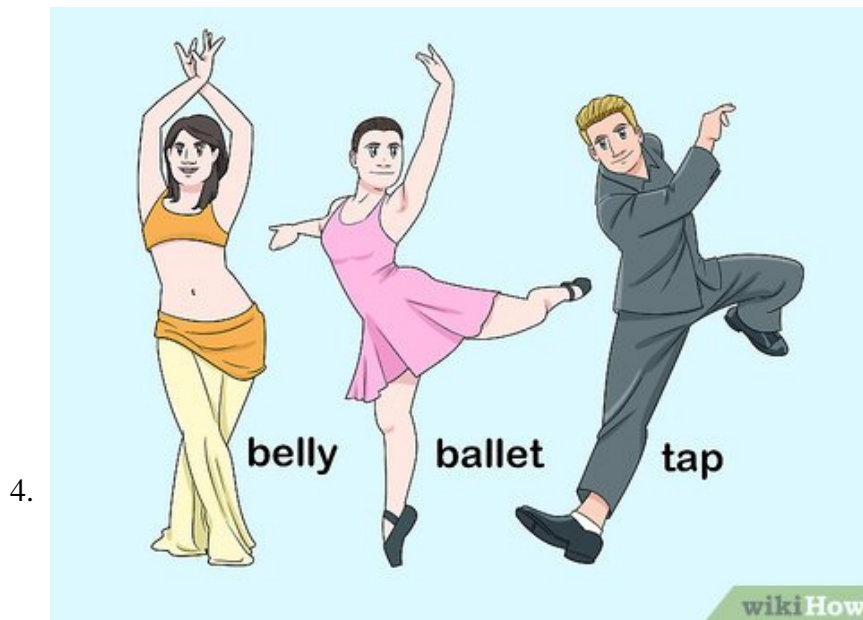
Stefanie Chu-Leong
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Stefanie Chu-Leong is the Owner and Senior Event Planner for Stellify Events, an event management business based in the San Francisco Bay Area and California Central Valley. Stefanie has over 15 years of event planning experience and specializes in large-scale events and special occasions. She has a BA in Marketing from San Francisco State University.

Picture 5 of How to Book Entertainment

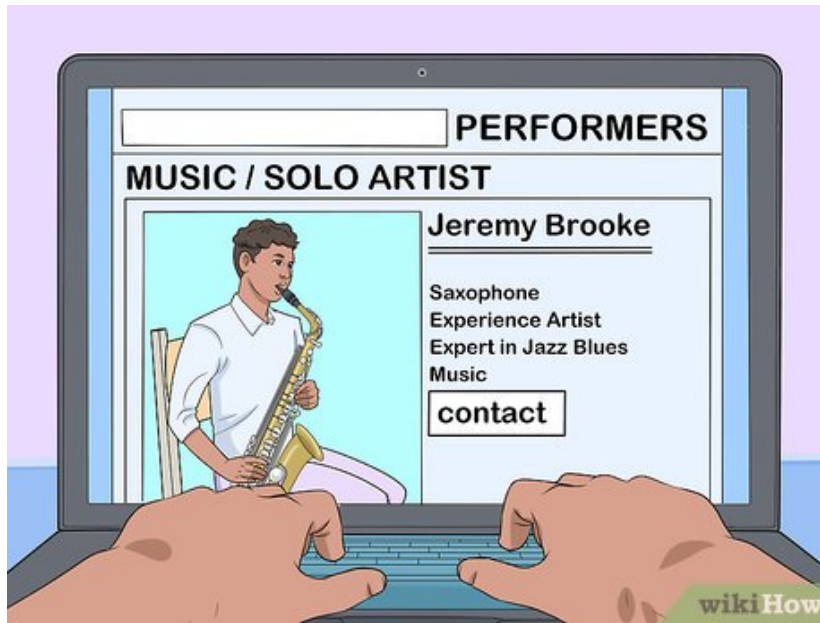
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Our Expert Agrees: When you're choosing an entertainer for your event, think about the types of things you don't want. For instance, if you hate heavy metal or you don't want a band that plays pop covers, that can help you narrow down your list quickly.



Decide on genre and style. Maybe you want to book a dancer, but there are a number of dance styles you can choose from. Do you want a ballet, tap, or belly dancer? Think about what specific style of music, comedy, or lecture you would like to host. This will help narrow down your search.^[3]

5.



Research your top choices for entertainers. After you have an idea of genre or style, go online and search for performers that fit your criteria. Look for someone experienced and who has several solid references and reviews.

1. Try to find out details like performance background, experience level, training, or education.

6.



Watch live performances, either in person or video recordings. Google videos of the entertainers you are interested in booking. Look for any music videos or recordings of live performances. Watch performances to get an idea of what to expect. Will this be a good fit for your event?^[4]

1. Pay attention to how the crowd reacts to the music or the performance. Is everyone having fun? Does the entertainer carry themselves well? Answering questions like this can help you sort through potential entertainers.

Figuring out the Logistics



Reach out to an entertainer directly. Check their website to look for booking information. Some may have a phone number to call or a contact form to fill out. Mention the event location and date. Include details like the nature of the event and any expectations you may have. Be concise and friendly.^[5]

1. You may not get in touch with the performer directly, and that's okay. Talk to their manager or agent about your event.



Use a talent agent or entertainment agency, if you'd like. A talent agent's job is to pair performers with clients for live events. Entertainment agencies are companies focused on providing entertainment for events. You can search for either companies or agents online to help you find performers.^[6]

1. They can also help you with the business aspects, like negotiating the contract and hashing out the details.
2. Agents and companies get a percentage of every entertainment deal, so be mindful of this when you are preparing your budget.
3. Typical response time is 3-5 days. Follow up with another email if you haven't received a response after about 5 days.



Consult with your venue about any event restrictions. Whether your venue is booked or you are still deciding, check in with the venue to discuss your event. Some venues are better suited for certain events than others, and it is helpful to look into your venue before you decide your entertainment.^[7]

1. You can call or email the venue directly, or search on their website for information.
2. Make sure there is enough room for the entertainment you are thinking about. Also think about whether your event will be indoors or outdoors.
3. For example, if you want to book a DJ, they will need space to set up audio equipment and a table or two. You will also want room for a dance floor, and maybe a laser or two! Keep this in mind as you are looking for venues or booking your entertainer.

4.



Request a consultation with your entertainer or booking agent. It is easier to go over expectations and discuss price face-to-face. If your entertainer has time and if it works with your schedule, arrange a meeting to go over your event.^[8]

5.



Discuss any questions, requests, and requirements with your performer. You can discuss either in person or over the phone. Ask any questions to either the entertainer or their manager, and answer and questions to clarify the nature of your event. Be sure to ask if your entertainer has any particular requirements.

1. If you have any particular requests, like songs or shoutouts, let them know in advance.
2. Flushing out all of these details before the event helps prevent miscommunication and ensures everyone is happy and having fun.

6.



Agree upon the booking rate. Most entertainers will have a standard rate they charge, usually by the hour. The entertainer or their agent will offer you a price, and you can discuss the price in terms of your budget. Perhaps you discuss how to make their rate work within your budget, like shortening the time. Or, perhaps they have adjusted rates based on the nature of your event.^[9]

1. Negotiate the price with the performer by proposing a rate 10% less than what they offer.
2. It is okay to walk away from your proposed deal if it doesn't work for you. Simply say, 'This is not in my budget. I apologize for any inconvenience.'

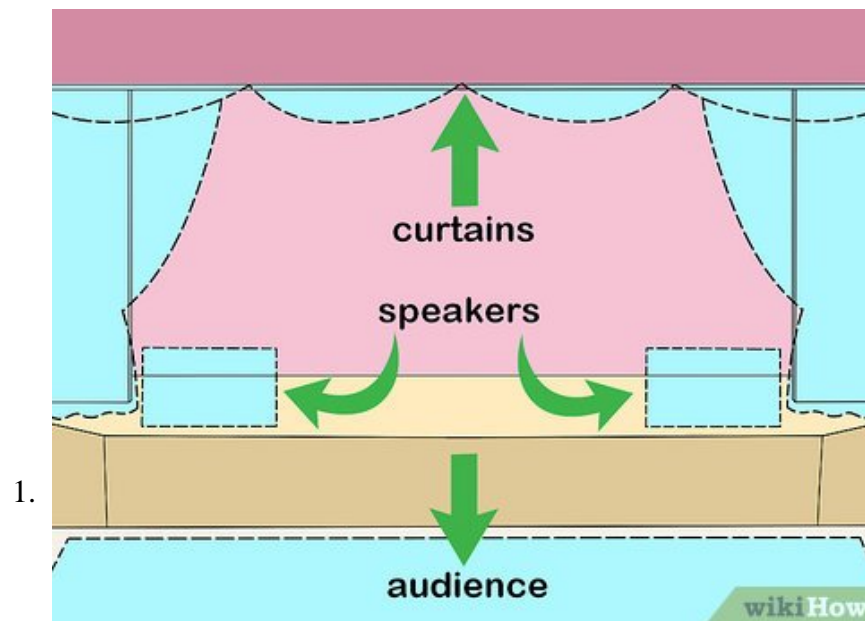
7.



Write and sign a contract if you want official agreements. You and your performer can talk about details and negotiate your agreements until both parties are satisfied. Then, put the agreements in writing, so everyone is clear about expectations and rate of pay. Have your entertainer and his agent or manager sign the contract, and then sign it yourself.

1. You can also make a verbal agreement if you'd prefer.

Setting up for a Great Event



Designate your performance space. Choose where you want to feature your entertainment. Clean up your area and set up any furniture or decorations, like your stage, dance floor, and sound equipment.

1. You can base your preparations around any other reservations and the nature of your event. For example, perhaps you are waiting on a catering order.



Ensure all guests can see and hear your entertainment. Before the event, test out the performance location and sound equipment. Check to make sure the microphone works and that the sound can be heard from all angles of the room. If you have a visual performance, stand in various spots of the room to check visibility.

1. Make adjustments to the location and sound of your performer as needed.



Plan for scheduling delays, just in case. Even Broadway prepares understudies, so be ready for anything. You should always expect the unexpected and have some flexibility when planning events. Have some time-filling ideas in mind for a 30 minute or 3 hour delay.

1. You can have a backup entertainer, a brief welcome or introduction, for example.
2. In case your DJ cancels, you can plan to play your own music. Use CDs, cell phone apps, or your computer.
3. If your comedian is late, have someone improvise before they get there!

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